

**File Code:** 6270 (436655)  
**Date:** JUL 10 2019

Mr. Austin Williams  
Alaska Director of Law and Policy  
Trout Unlimited  
3105 Lake Shore Drive, Suite 102B  
Anchorage, Alaska 99517

Dear Mr. Williams:

Thank you for your letter of April 15, 2019, to U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue regarding the Alaska Roadless Rule on the Tongass National Forest. Secretary Perdue has asked the Forest Service to respond. I apologize for the delayed response.

I appreciate you sharing your perspective on how Tongass National Forest planning, public engagement, and management affects you and your businesses.

I am glad to hear that the time and commitment demonstrated by local Forest Service staff helped find a way forward through competing interests to a workable resolution.

In response to a petition from the State of Alaska, Secretary Perdue has instructed the Forest Service to initiate a public rulemaking process, pursuant to the Administrative Procedures Act, to address roadless area management concerns on the Tongass National Forest. An Alaska roadless rule will determine possible adjustments to the 2001 National Roadless Rule's application in Alaska to address economic development or other needs while still conserving roadless areas for future generations. This approach to rulemaking aims to build and maintain a broad coalition of support that will be reflected in a state-specific Alaska roadless rule.

We expect to release a Draft Environmental Impact Statement and proposed Alaska Roadless rule in summer 2019, which opens a public comment period. During this period, we plan to host another round of public meetings to provide information about these documents and answer questions. I hope you will continue to participate in this process by providing your comments.

The Department of Agriculture is committed to meeting economic, social, and natural resource needs for Alaskans and all Americans. The Forest Service values its collaboration with the State of Alaska, local communities, and other partners as we strive for shared stewardship of our public lands.



Thank you for your interest in the management of the Tongass National Forest. I appreciate your participation in this process. If you have further questions, please have a member of your staff contact Christopher B. French, Deputy Chief, National Forest System at (202) 205-1689. I encourage you to share this response with your colleagues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Victoria Christiansen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, vertical tail on the letter "n".

VICTORIA CHRISTIANSEN  
Chief

**From:** [Austin Williams](#)  
**To:** [Lockwood, Amanda - OSEC](#); [Christiansen, Victoria C -FS](#); [French, Chris -FS](#); [Snieckus, Mary -FS](#); [Crandall, Doug -](#);  
[Schmid, David - FS](#); [Stewart, Earl -FS](#); [Tu, Kenneth K -FS](#)  
**Cc:** [Keegan McCarthy](#)  
**Subject:** Letter from Alaska Guides and Outfitters RE: Alaska Roadless Rule  
**Date:** Monday, April 15, 2019 4:57:13 PM  
**Attachments:** [Roadless Letter from AK Guides - 20190415.pdf](#)

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Hello,

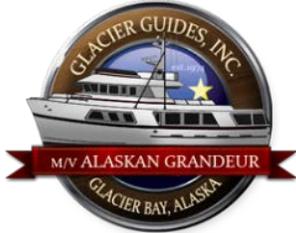
Please see the attached letter to Secretary Perdue and Chief Christiansen regarding the Alaska Roadless Rulemaking. Keegan McCarthy, cc'd here, asked me to deliver this letter on behalf of him and his colleagues in the Southeast Alaska guiding community. They advocate for the Forest Service to adopt a final rule that considers the existing outfitter and guide industry by balancing any new exemptions with expanded conservation measures for important public lands in the Tongass 77 and TNC/Audubon Conservation Priority Areas.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Austin



**Austin Williams** / Alaska Director of Law and Policy  
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**Trout Unlimited**  
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April 15, 2019

The Honorable Sonny Perdue  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Ms. Vicki Christiansen  
Chief, U.S. Forest Service  
1400 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue and Chief Christiansen:

As professional guides and outfitters in Southeast Alaska, we know firsthand how important the Tongass National Forest is to the people and communities in the region. We live and work in the Tongass, and depend on its abundant fish and wildlife populations, and the healthy and productive habitat that supports those populations. For us, decisions made in Washington D.C. about how the Tongass will be managed don't simply change lines on a map; they affect us personally and have profound impacts to our businesses, our ability to attract clients and deliver the experiences they have come to expect, and, ultimately, our ability to put food on the table.

For years, we have attended public meetings, submitted comments, and otherwise driven ourselves dizzy participating in a maze of planning efforts undertaken by the Forest Service on the Tongass. We strongly support the Tongass Transition and the 2016 amendment to the

Tongass Land Management Plan, which were the product of years of collaboration and hard compromise. We are also grateful for the time and commitment demonstrated by local Forest Service staff to resolve competing interests within the outfitter and guide industry through the recent Shoreline II planning process. These efforts achieved a careful balance among the competing users of the Tongass that can allow for sustainable management of the forest and continued economic growth in the region.

Any changes or modifications to the Roadless Rule on the Tongass should recognize the priceless fish and wildlife values of the Tongass and be designed to avoid impacts to existing outfitter, guide, tourism and recreational users. Any exemptions from the Roadless Rule's prohibitions on commercial logging and associated road building should not displace existing users, infringe on important conservation areas within the Tongass 77 and TNC/Audubon areas, and be offset by increased conservation measures for important fish and wildlife habitat within roaded portions of the Tongass 77 and TNC/Audubon Conservation Priority Areas.

The Tongass is a world-class resource, supporting a way of life found nowhere else in the world. It attracts visitors from across the globe, who come for its abundant fish and game populations, unparalleled scenic beauty, and outstanding recreation opportunity. Any new Roadless Rule for the Tongass needs to perpetuate these values and protect the assets that are at the core of our business: the scenery, wildlife, and watersheds of the Tongass National Forest. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lucas Bastian  
Archipelago Adventures  
Sitka, AK

Scott Newman  
Alaska Bear Guides LLC  
Petersburg, AK

Zach and Alisha Decker  
Glacier Guides, Inc.  
Gustavus, Alaska

Bruce and Anne Marie Parker  
Parker Guide Service  
Sitka, AK

Justin Johns  
Fishing Bear Lodge & North Alaska  
Expeditions

Chad Poppe  
Coastal Alaska Safaris  
Wrangell, AK

Keegan McCarthy  
Coastal Alaska Adventures  
Petersburg, AK

Bert Stromquist  
Baranof Expeditions  
Sitka, AK